1:Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1952
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Such are the legends. The idea of heaven as an upper world similar to the earth and with inhabitants like those of the world below is encountered in the legends of the culture-hero brothers relating to the theft of fire (see p. 130) and the origin of languages. These tell how in the old days there was free passage between the two worlds, how this was interrupted, and how thereafter an attempt was made to reëstablish it. All these motives are so common in American mythology that they do not merit further comment.

ta-ë′ *and the souls.*—Quite different, however, is the concept of the most important personage of the upper world, ta-ë′. I do not know of any similar figure in the religion of other tribes. Nothing is known of her origin. She is apparently as ancient as the heaven in which she lives, and is immortal but definitely not omnipotent, nor omniscient, nor infallible. Overburdened with tasks, she may involuntarily cause damage to men through her mistakes. Nothing material in the world was created by her, nor does she govern anything; therefore she is neither the "Common Mother" nor the "Primary Mother" in Baldus' terminology.

Prayers are not directed to her, nor does she receive sacrifices. She has nothing to do directly with the culture-hero brothers, who equal her in importance, or with the spirits of the trees or the demons (ńɔɔ′) of the lower world. No shaman is in communication with her. Nevertheless, for the Tukuna she is a figure of great importance and respect, because of her inseparable connection with the notion of sin and subsequent punishment, in life or after death, since she is the mistress of that part of the human soul called "naa′ë." With the other part of the soul, called "načii′" (shade of the deceased), she has nothing to do.

ta-ë′ does not represent a divine justice that tots up the sins and good deeds of the soul. She takes into consideration only three categories of crime: incest, infanticide (including voluntary abortion), and murder through witchcraft. She does not bother with such trifles as theft or a hot-blooded killing. Incest (vɔ:′mači) is a transgression of the law of exogamy which she established when she taught the first men to which clan each belonged, making them taste the jacuruxy broth (see pp. 58 and 130); this was the only time, however, that she intervened in the work of the culture heroes. Incest is the only crime for which ta-ë′ eventually punishes the sinner, by madness while he is still living.

I have already discussed the fate of an infanticide's soul (p. 69). When the soul of a sorcerer appears before ta-ë′, she treats it in the same fashion as she does that of an infanticide; in fact, the three sins mentioned above are considered almost equal. The gravity of a crime depends upon whether the sin was committed thoughtlessly and with some extenuating circumstances, and whether it is repeated.

If there are extenuating circumstances, the sinner is purified by one of the čorë′ruma, which licks him from toe to crown. However, even if the naa′ë of a perverse and stubborn sinner slips past the tɔ/ri′ta gate, it is torn to shreds by the čorë′ruma or rejected by ta-ë′, who orders lightning to cast it down on the earth again, or even sends it below to the underworld (na:′pị), where it is transformed into a tiny frog (nʊ:′gʊ), with whose death it vanishes.

It is noteworthy that the Tukuna regard as crimes these three sins which not only harm the individual but are also ruinous for humanity as a whole: "Thou